

Theodore and Mary Wigton House  
211-13 12th Street  
Fourth Ward Neighborhood  
Altoona  
Blair County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5861

HABS  
PA,  
7-ALTO,  
88-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
THEODORE AND MARY WIGTON HOUSE

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Location: 211-213 12th Street

Date of Erection: by 1887

Description: This large, two-and-one-half-story, double house is clad in novelty wood siding. The facade and roof line suggest two front-gabled ells joined at the section that projects toward the street. The central projecting section has a hipped roof with a front gable. Small dentils and brackets support the cornice molding. The cornice returns have been enclosed.

History: It has been difficult to determine a construction date for this structure, but it appears to have been built between 1887 and 1891. It is likely that there was an earlier house on this lot, or perhaps some portion of the current house. If that is the case, it could explain the unusual design.

Joseph B. Downing, a clerk, purchased this lot from John Wright for \$400 in 1870. For such a sum, a dwelling must surely have been part of the purchase. This was an investment property for Downing who maintained a house and lot elsewhere in the Fourth Ward from 1871 to 1883. He sold the property at 3rd Avenue and 12th Street to Theodore H. Wigton in May 1873. The value for tax purposes was listed as \$650 that year. Wigton, then a cashier at Altoona Bank, apparently also bought the property for investment purposes.

Theodore and Mary Wigton sold the property in 1874 to G. Lewis Myers. Myers was also a clerk at Altoona Bank. Myers immediately deeded the property back to Mary Wigton. The Wigtons continued to own the property until 1887 when they sold it to William T. McConnell for \$2,500.

McConnell, a machinist, lived around the corner at 1201 3rd Ave. He continued to maintain both properties. In 1891, a double house is listed for the first time at the 12th Street address. It was valued at \$1,700. The McConnells' doubled their investment in only four years when they sold the property to Dr. E. E. Ball, a dentist, for \$5,750. Dr. Ball immediately deeded the property to Annie McConnell, wife of William. The McConnells continued to own the property with brief periods of temporarily transferring it out of their hands until they finally sold the half known as No. 213 to William and Mary Maines for \$3,400 in 1923. Frank and Mary Singer purchased the other half of the double house, 211, from the McConnells also on September 28, 1923 for \$3,400. Frank was a brakeman for the railroad.

William and Mary Maines purchased No. 211 from the Singers in 1928 for \$1. That purchase returned the entire lot and house to single-family ownership.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: Z/68, 30/41, 32/104-106/ 62/570, 89/18-20, 194/321, 301/540-542, 311/450, 313/92, 372/559.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5786) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Nancy Spiegel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Spiegel's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.